

I Am In a Strait

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Preacher: Pastor Wolski

[0 : 0 0] preached, he'd say, I'm preaching tonight on hypocrites in the church, and he'd say, I'm glad to see you're all here. Alright, okay. Find Philippians chapter 1. Philippians chapter 1. Tonight we are going to continue with our study from the Apostle Paul on the I am's of the Apostle Paul.

Philippians chapter 1. And the last time we were together on Wednesday, we were in Philippians 1 in the same chapter.

And we saw in verse 17 that he said, I am set for the defense of the gospel. And we took a look at some reasons why the Apostle Paul was set, he was fixed, and he was in defense of the gospel.

It was something that was revealed to him, like specifically revealed to him. And it was a big, big deal. The gospel was. It replaced, it overrode the law that they had been under, that he had grown up under.

He was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and now the gospel of Jesus Christ gave him liberty. It gave him something the law could never give him. It gave him forgiveness of sins forever. It gave him eternal security and the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

[1 : 1 4] And he was set for the defense of the gospel. He defended the gospel to Peter when he was not walking according to the truth of the gospel. He was set for the defense of the gospel against the churches at Galatia who were bewitched and were allowing, who were trying to, having begun in the spirit, who were trying to be perfected by the works of the flesh.

And he had to set them straight and defend the truth of the gospel. Because it was revealed to him. Another reason was because there was enemies of the gospel. And the third thought we had last time was because it works.

Because the gospel works. It is the power of God unto salvation. There is nothing greater than the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like nothing, not a thing ever in the history of this universe that I've ever know of in this book.

But the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, it's that good. Now it's going to get better when Christ comes back and it's going to get better beyond that. But for right now, you and I ought to defend that gospel like the apostle Paul did.

Because it is the power of God for your nieces and your nephews and your aunts and your uncles and your mothers and your fathers and your co-workers and your neighbors. They all need Christ or they're going to go to hell. And they need somebody to stand up for the truth of the gospel.

[2 : 2 6] They may be lost in religion. They may be led astray and be believing a lie. And they need somebody to defend the true gospel, what God offers to them, a free gift of eternal life.

Now we're going to move past that and find in this same chapter another I am of the apostle Paul. And it's in verse 23 where Paul says, I am in a strait betwixt two.

I'm in a strait. A strait is a narrow place. It's kind of a tight spot, a pinch. There's a pressing decision upon him. And we're going to take a look at that here tonight.

But before we do, let's pray and then we're going to read this passage a little bit. So Father, we come before you, before your holy throne. Thankful for the word of God, for the truth of this Bible.

Thank you, Lord, for revealing it to us by your spirit and for giving us this truth, for retaining it even in our lifetime that we can have and hold and know this book and believe it. And Lord, tonight, please help us to understand it and to be able to relate this situation Paul found himself in and his reaction to it.

[3 : 33] Help us to relate it then to things in our life and decisions that we have to make and straights and tight places we find ourselves in. And may Jesus Christ be glorified. May our hearts be open to your word.

And we pray you'll do a work tonight. Help us out, we ask in Christ's name. Amen. Alright, let's start in verse 20 and then follow on and read down to verse 26 just to get us kind of our bearings of what's going on here.

Paul says, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor. Yet what I shall choose I want not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

[4 : 43] Now we're going to finish the chapter later. But in verse 20, Paul introduces life and death. At the end of that verse, he's talking about Christ being magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death.

And this is not something that Paul talked about a lot. Specifically in these church age epistles, he doesn't write to these churches talking about his own mortality. He doesn't talk about the day that he's going to die and kick the bucket.

But if anything, a theme of the Apostle Paul is celebrating Jesus Christ and eternal life and having life like being raised from the dead. He doesn't talk about going down to the dirt too much.

But here in this passage, there's something going on. And I'll tell you right now, I'm not sure I can give you a good clear conclusion of something. It's puzzled me. I made a few phone calls this week and just didn't get any insight from anybody.

But we're going to cover some stuff. At least I'll throw out my dilemma. I'll give that to you and then we'll move past it. But he brings up this thing about life and death.

[5 : 44] And it's just not the common language he uses. I think something is pressing on Paul as he's in bonds in what appears to be his second time in prison here.

Maybe his third if you count Jerusalem. It seems like there's something coming. And he's still got two years at least left of his life.

It's not until the end of 2 Timothy where he says that I have finished my course. I've kept the faith. Whereas the time of his departure is at hand. So the time of his departure, at least, he may have had a feeling of something coming.

But it didn't come. I don't know. But here he starts talking about death. And he's asking his earnest expectation and hope in verse 20 is that he wouldn't be ashamed. That he would have boldness.

That Christ would be magnified in his body whether it's by life or by death. It seems like he might be a little nervous about being on the edge of something.

[6 : 42] So in verse 21 he says, For to me to live is Christ and now to die is gain. And he brings it back up a second time. Life and death. The third time is in 23.

I'm in a straight betwixt two. Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ. And there's another reference to death. Then he says, Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful. That's to live.

And so three times in these few verses, it's life or death. Life or death. And he says, I'm in a straight betwixt two. Now here's something interesting. First of all, verse 21.

He says, For to me to live is Christ. If I'm going to live, it's Christ. It's like no question, not even thinking twice about it.

I'm sold out to Jesus Christ. If I'm choosing life for to me to live, that's Jesus Christ. To die, well, that's gain.

[7 : 41] That's far better. That's to be with Christ. But he says, If I'm going to live, I'm going to live for Jesus Christ. Notice in verse 22, he says, But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor.

What is he saying? He's saying, for to me to live is Christ. If I'm going to live, it's for Jesus Christ. And if I live in this flesh for Christ, this is what it brings me.

I'm locked up in prison. And it seems like he's facing death. This is the fruit of my labor. This is where I end up, imprisoned. Look at verse 30. He says, Having the same conflict which he saw in me, because he was imprisoned in Philippi already, and now here to be in me.

So this is the second at least time that he's back in jail again. He's in bonds, as he says in verse 13, and a few other times in this chapter. So the apostle Paul's locked up.

And I believe that's what he's saying in verse 22. If I live in the flesh, it's going to be for Jesus Christ. That's a given. I'm sold out. And if I live in the flesh, if I stay here, this is what happens.

[8 : 48] This is the fruit of my labor. There are so many enemies of the gospel. And every city I go into, I face opposition. I get run out of town, and I get beaten, and I get on a ship to get away from that, and I get arrested, and then I end up on shore, and I'm drowning, and I'm spending time in the deep.

And this is the fruit of my labor. But then he makes this comment. Look at the end of verse 22, and this one really got me. Yet what I shall choose, I want not.

Now the word want means know, to know, and he says, I know not, or I don't know. And it's an awkward, it's a strange thing that he says, in my opinion, yet what I shall choose, see, it sounds like he's saying, I don't know yet what I'm going to choose.

That's what it looks like to me. I've read through this a hundred times, and tried to seek some insight, and I haven't found any. I don't know what the deal exactly with that is, but I find it to be an interesting comment.

He definitely uses the word choose, and as a matter of fact, it's the only time the word choose shows up in your New Testament. The only singular time, Paul's got a choice.

[9 : 58] And he says, what I shall choose, I just don't know yet. I don't know what I'm going to choose. Now, what's he speaking about? What's he choosing? Is he choosing between life and death?

I don't know. I can't say that he is, but he says this. Remember, remember when King David sinned with numbering the people?

He sent Joab out to number the people, and that didn't go well for him. The Lord sent a judgment against him for that. He sent the prophet Gad to David, and he said, you've got three choices for your punishment.

And David replied to Gad, he said, I am in a great straight. I've got a tough decision on my hands, and I don't know what to do.

And so he said, well, I'll fall into the hands of the Lord's mercies rather than men's. And Paul says, I am in a straight betwixt two. And in verse 22, yet what I shall choose, I want not.

[11:00] Why? For I am in a straight. I'm in a tough spot. And I don't know what I sound, I don't know what he's saying. I'm going to say this a hundred times. But I do know this.

He knows that his work is not yet finished. In verse 24, he says, nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, more needful for you, having his confidence. I know I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance. So he knows that he's still got things to do on this earth.

He knows that, and he even expects he'll be released from prison. In verse 26, at the end of that verse, you can see the words, for me by my coming to you again. He thinks he's going to make it back to Philippi, get out of jail, and be able to go see these believers.

So he believes that getting out of jail is real. It's very possible. But I'd say it's not maybe a sure thing. Look at chapter 2. And look at chapter 2, verses 23 and 4.

He's going to send Timothy to this church. And in verse 23, him therefore I hope to send presently. Notice this. So soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

[12:08] But I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly. I'm trusting God, that I'll get out, and that I'll come to see you again. But he did say this. He said, I'll see how it will go with me.

Because he doesn't know. So he's in prison. There's some uncertainty. And he's starting to talk about death, like it's imminent. And he wants to magnify Christ, no matter what, if it's by life or by death, to live as Christ.

And if I live in the flesh, I'm going to keep serving Christ, and it's going to bring me right back to these kind of places. It's going to be locked up. Going to have the enemy get his hand up on me. Now, I'm introducing all this stuff because I can't conclusively say what Paul was referring to when he said, what I shall choose.

I don't know what the choice was. I can understand that he was in a tight spot, in a straight betwixt two. I can understand a pressing decision was upon him.

If I consider that he has a choice between life and death, I can't imply that he has the opportunity to commit suicide, or like that's something he would consider doing, taking his life to be with Christ, which is far better.

[13:19] I don't think that's what he's saying because he, earlier in verse 20, says that he wants Christ to be magnified whether by death. And that wouldn't magnify Jesus Christ, so I don't see how that could be even part of the equation.

So that just, it eludes me. It confuses me to say, what is it? I asked one guy, he said, well, he didn't put too much stock in it. Just, eh, it's just the way he talks. Just, eh, didn't really see nothing.

I said, but it says choose. He's got a choice. What is he choosing? Another guy, stopped him dead in his tracks, and he's a Bible guy, and he's like, bro, I never saw that before.

And then he's like, mind was blown, and he's reading it, and he's like, and he's telling me exactly what I just told you. Like, it's life and death on both sides of this, and there's a choice, right? In between. Here's one thing that I will carry this one step further.

If there was a choice that related to his death, it makes me consider a few other men that God called. For instance, Jonah. After he had gotten his second opportunity to serve God, and he went and preached, and God was, they repented, God was merciful to those people, he sat back in bitterness, and he was ready to die.

[14 : 29] Wanted God to take his life. I don't know what that's all about, but that prophet, didn't want to live anymore. Moses was frustrated with the children of Israel, and with all the responsibility on his shoulders, and all their chiding, and their wickedness, and he was ready for God to take him too.

You remember Elijah? Elijah, when he escaped the prophets of Baal, and he escaped Jezebel, and then escapes for his life, and then he sits there and says, it's enough, Lord.

Just kill me. I'm done. I'm ready to die. I'm the only one left. And so, there's a couple examples in this book of men that have been called of God to do some things, and whether it's their own selfishness, or just weakness, or bitterness, or frustration, they kind of reach a breaking point, or come to an end.

And I don't know that that's the case with Paul. I'm not really saying it is, but I'm just trying to understand what's going on here. So, I'm unsure of the exact situation, but there certainly is a pressure that accompanies the ministry, and I would say it's not just reserved for leaders and ministers in the body of Christ, but I'd say for any believer that's going to walk with God in this present evil world, and that's going to live the Christian life, you're going to have pressures.

It's going to come with the territory, and you're going to find yourself in a strait. At some point in your life, you're going to find yourself between a rock and a hard place, and you're not going to know which one's right, or which one should I choose, what should I do.

[16 : 07] Now, regardless of the actual situation, that's where Paul's at. He's, I am. The I am tonight is, I am in a strait, betwixt two.

And he's in a tough spot, and the Christian life will present some tough situations where a decision has to be made, and sometimes there's not an easy one to make.

Especially, you know what our nature is, our tendency is, is to take the easy road, is to depart to be with Christ, which is far better for me, but that wasn't really the right one.

Nevertheless, is what he said after that. So when you're presented with a tough choice, and when one is definitely seeming easier for you, or more desirable for you, and works out better for you, it may be far better for you, like Paul, it may not be the right one.

The alternative may be a tough one. The alternative may not be exactly exciting, or it may just be like verse 30, where he says, it's a conflict, is what it is. But it may be the one that God would have you do.

[17 : 12] And so when we have these straits, or these tough places that we find ourselves in, in life, let's follow our example, the Apostle Paul. And let's see what he did.

What did he do? Let's look at three things that he did here in this passage. And the first thing is that he chose the way, or he made the choice that will edify others. Now, you need to read this, and then think about this.

He made a choice that's going to be a benefit to other people, not to him. It was far better for him to depart. But he chose what was going to edify others. Look at verse 24 again.

Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. Not for me. For you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all.

Why? For your furtherance and joy of faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ. Paul chose what will edify others.

[18 : 13] You can see his heart. He truly concerned about these believers. what was needful for these believers. He understood their growth was needful, their spiritual condition, their furtherance, their joy of faith, their rejoicing.

And so, I guess I'm going to stick around a little bit longer. I guess I'm going to endure some more hardness for Jesus Christ because it's more needful for you than I do.

And so, Paul chose the one that would edify others. Jesus Christ, or I mean, sorry, he led these people to Jesus Christ.

They're still young in the Lord. They don't have a long history and generations of Christianity and the Word of God. This is all brand new. I mean, he's writing his first epistle to this church.

They probably know very little and have very little examples to follow. If Paul could make it back to them, if he could make it back to that church, I bet it would mean the world to them if they could see his face one more time.

[19 : 23] If he could sit down and preach to them again the Word of God. If he could tell them of his experiences. He couldn't text. It wasn't on the internet. What did they know about what's going on in all the other regions of the world or the cities where he's been?

If he could come and tell them how he preached the gospel with boldness in this city and how these people came to Christ and how these, there's other brothers and he could name Barnabas and he could tell them of times where he was with them and things that happened, they would rejoice their hearts and souls to hear what God is doing elsewhere.

It would encourage them to do what's right for Jesus Christ. So Paul, the choice to Paul was not what's best for me, not which is far better for me, but the one that's going to edify you believers.

I wonder, Christian, do you ever make any choices in your life that's not going to be for your benefit but for the blessings of someone else?

You won't ever go wrong when you make the choice to put your own desires aside and to edify somebody else in the Lord, to be a blessing to somebody else, to make a visit, to go out of your way to minister for Jesus Christ to somebody.

[20 : 37] You'll never regret, you'll never ever regret choosing to do something for Christ, to serve others instead of serving yourself. You'll never regret that.

The Lord Jesus Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Look at chapter number 2 in Philippians and look at verses 3 and 4 where Paul says, let nothing be done through strife or vain, vain, vain glory.

Just vanity for me to glorify me. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Remember Paul, it was far better for him to be with Christ, but I'm esteeming you at this church better than what's for me. Verse 4, Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

What do you know about giving yourself to others? What do you know about that? I think if you're a mom or a dad then you've probably experienced, you've come to know what it is to give up your time, to give up your freedom, to give up your sanity sometimes, or your sleep, or even what you could be doing with your money.

[21 : 59] Instead, you're pouring it into your children and you're furthering their education or their entertainment or just advancing them. It's because your care is on them. You do things for them. And as a parent, that comes natural and you learn that really well.

But that's a mom and a dad caring for their own child. That's their own. And the verse later in chapter 2, in verse number 21, he said, For all seek their own.

In verse 20, he said, I have no man like mine who will naturally care for your state. It's natural to care for your kids. But what do you know about giving yourself so that somebody else can be blessed?

What do you know about caring for others in the body of Christ? I said it earlier, it's natural, it's most common. The most common basis for our choices are what's in it for me.

That is the most base and natural thing you do in life is what's in it for me. Am I going to enjoy this? Is there anything in this for me today? Because if it's not, why would I do it?

[23 : 06] Why would I spend my money? Why would I give my energy? Why would I even put any focus on it if I don't get anything out of it? Now, if you don't stop and think about it, you're just doing it all the time.

All the time. It's like the very natural, common basis for all choices. What's in it for me? But Paul chose what edified others. And he had to put his own personal desire down in order to minister to others.

So the first thing is he chose to edify others. The second thought here from this passage, we stopped in verse 26. Let's pick it up in 27 and 8, is that Paul chose to be an example to others.

And so in this verse, we'll see that he challenges this church to stand fast. He challenges them to strive together and to not fear the enemies. And so what kind of example is he?

What kind of a message is he going to be sending if he just took the easy way out? He just bailed on the hard situation. So he's telling them don't give up. Verse 27, only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that ye stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God.

[24 : 31] Paul's saying, or Paul chose in this straight, he was in a straight betwixt two, he chose to be an example to others. He could have bailed, he could have took what appeared to be the easy way out, but he chose to edify others and he chose to be an example.

Look at chapter 4 and verse number 9. Here's something Paul commands these people to follow him. Verse number 9, he says, those things which ye have both learned, and receive, and heard, and seen in me, do.

Why would anybody follow a quitter if Paul was going to be a quitter and taking the easy road out and bailing on his tough decisions? But Paul wasn't a quitter.

Paul was a fighter. Paul suffered and Paul starved and Paul labored more abundantly than they all. Paul prayed, Paul fought for the work of God and for the body of Christ and he was an example.

Come back to Philippians 1 where we stopped at verse 28. Let's finish the chapter. He says, for unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which he saw in me and now here to be in me.

[25 : 52] He says, I'm doing it and so can you. I'm suffering. I'm sticking it out and you can follow my lead too, believers. It'll be okay.

And so Paul made the choice to be an example and that's my edification to you tonight is when you're in a straight betwixt two is make the choice that's going to be an example to somebody else.

Other people need examples. Other Christians and this world alone alike need examples. How are they going to learn how to grow without an example to follow?

How would a young believer learn how to be faithful if they don't see you be faithful when times get tough? How is a young believer going to learn how to endure hardness if you can't endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ?

How are they going to learn how to pray through the hard times if you bail on it when it gets tough? Make the choice where you can edify somebody else and make the choice where you can be an example.

[26 : 57] Show yourself an example to another believer. They need to learn how to pray. They need to learn how to give when things are tight. And there's a straight betwixt two.

They need an example to do that. They need to learn how to walk and to please God and if they don't have any examples they'll never learn to do it. I think many of you in here had examples that taught you the word of God or that showed you how to live for God or how to be faithful to the Lord and the things of God taught you how to witness and to handle the word of God.

Somebody taught you how to pray how to stand for Jesus Christ. I remember going door knocking with a brother and I didn't know too much about it. I wasn't that great. I was just a teenager but this guy was really good.

Like he could talk to anybody. He wasn't afraid of anybody and I was intimidated by everything and I learned like they're not screaming at us. They're not throwing us off their porch like I was afraid.

You know a lot of times they just say thank you or no thank you and we just go. Sometimes they yell at us. Sometimes they slam the door. Sometimes they cuss at us and then what do we do? Well we just say we should pray for them and we leave.

[28 : 09] We go to the next door and we keep sowing the seed and I learned that from an example. Somebody taught me how to handle that adversity. So make the choice to be an example.

If you're in a tight spot and you're not sure the decision to make choose the one that can edify another believer. Choose the one that can be an example to another believer and then there's one more back in this passage again look at chapter 1 and come back to verse number 20.

This is where Paul said according to my earnest expectation and my hope and look at this phrase that in nothing I shall be ashamed that in nothing you need to make the choice that won't cause you shame when you stand before the Lord because Paul's talking about glorifying Christ in his body whether it's by life or by death but in all of it I don't want to be ashamed of what I do.

I don't want to be ashamed at all of it. Now keep your place here in Philippians but flip back to 1 John chapter 2 just a real good verse that I want to put on this spot here.

It'll do us all very much well to remember that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ and every one of us shall give account of himself to God and the last thing that you and I are going to want in that day is to be ashamed before him of our selfish choices or that we did what was easiest for us in the circumstance.

[29 : 38] We didn't care about how it affected other believers or how it was an opportunity for us to stand for Jesus Christ or do something for eternity but we just took the easy road out and the last thing you want to want in that day is to stand there and be ashamed and realize you dodged opportunities to do something for Christ.

1 John 2 look at verse 28 and John's encouraging these little children these young believers he says now little children abide in him that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Some people are going to be ashamed when Jesus Christ shows up they're going to be ashamed of the life they're living they're going to be ashamed of the choices they made when things got tough and how they bailed on the Lord or they chose the easiest road and they failed to observe the word of God or to be an example or to edify or any of that and then they're going to be shamed standing before the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now come back to Philippians again find chapter 4 and we're almost finished. I think this thought here at the end that choose what won't cause you shame at the judgment seat of Christ I think that could completely alter how you make decisions today when you realize that you're going to give account of those decisions tomorrow.

And so in chapter 1 we read this Paul said I'm in a straight betwixt two and Paul didn't know what he was going to choose and again I don't know what that the full body of what he's saying what may be involved there but there is a tough situation and tough situations force tough decisions and there's absolutely things in this life that are not easy and things about this life that are just not simple and it may not be your fault it may be from decisions you've made in the past that brought you to this place it may be decisions other people made for themselves that affected you and brought you to this place and now you have to deal with it and whatever the case is you can find yourself plenty of times in life in a straight in a tough spot and not know which way you should go and what you should choose I want to encourage you tonight to make the right choice to choose what's going to edify others and be a blessing to them even if it hurts you I'm telling you you will not regret it choose to be a godly example so that others can learn from your testimony how they can walk and please God especially when things are tough and then thirdly choose what you won't be ashamed of when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and give account of your life because that alone could alter a lot of your thoughts and decisions today now the last thing

[32 : 29] I want us to look at was verse number 9 again of chapter 4 in Philippians and we didn't finish the verse where he said those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me do and look what happens the God of peace shall be with you now I want to apply this thought here to Paul's choice that he made to edify and to be an example and to not be ashamed and what he chose and he said just the way what you saw me do that's how you do that's him being the example and then what comes in with that is peace the God of peace shall be with you I'm big on this on peace meaning when you have tough decisions to make and from time to time some of you here and some that aren't here tonight they call or they want to sit and talk and they just spill something out and say I don't know what to do and I can't give them an answer and say well bless God this is the right choice obviously because it may not be that easy but the big thing the thing that I'm real big on is find an answer of peace from God if you don't have peace from God and all you have is pressure then you better back away and don't be hasty to make a decision and I'm big on seeking God and getting peace from him in that decision look earlier in this chapter at verse number six and seven

Paul says be careful for nothing but in everything you're in a straight betwixt two in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus you gotta make a big decision you wanna make the right decision you wanna make sure that God's in that decision and you're gonna wanna make sure his peace is there with it too and it will be it will absolutely be there when you're doing the right thing if there's no peace be careful be careful how you proceed because you may be getting ahead of God you may be listening to the wrong voice you may be tested and being tried and not understand what's going on seek that peace and when you have that peace act on it there was a time a couple times actually I'll just tell you about one of them specifically where I had an opportunity to move to Idaho this is right outside of Bible school and it was in 2005 and we were just a young

Carla and I young with just a little baby boy and there was an opportunity to go there and we took a trip to check it out the pastor of a church wanted me to come and be the youth leader and he had a bunch of kids that were coming up and he said I need a guy and I think you're the guy and I've been praying about it and the Lord laid me on you in my heart to call you and so I thought well this must be it this must be the will of God because a pastor called me and so we went and checked it out we flew out there we met him we're in the church and blah blah blah all that and I told him I said well I need to pray about it I think this is right just because of what the circumstances sounded like this is it we had just gotten out of Bible school in May and this was August of the same summer it just felt like there was nothing else on the table and I wanted to serve God and here's an opportunity this has got to be the Lord and so when I got home I prayed about it I'm seeking the Lord and I'm expecting like you know the next day a verse in the Bible is going to just be like go west young man or something like that and I'm just reading and nothing's happening and so I'm like

Lord is this right or wrong is this it seems like it's right I told him I thought it was right what do I do and days went by and two weeks went by and I felt like I need to answer this man and I don't have an answer to give him and now I'm not so sure and I start praying more fervently about it and now I'm like this could be where my children are raised and where you know our lives we spend 50 years of our lives I had no idea but it just felt like is this the will of God or not and now the pressure is coming in I need to make a decision I need to decide I need to know pretty soon I can't just you know string him along for months and months and months and I didn't have an answer from God and I never had an answer from God and I kept praying for it asking the Lord to just show me something give me some direction something from the word of God or just move my heart and prayer whatever you want to do just do it and there was nothing and nothing and nothing and nothing and nothing and nothing and the pastor finally called me after it was like a month we had been in touch a little bit and I said to him

I said I think it's right I just be honest I don't I can't seem to get a piece from God about it and so I don't know I don't know what to do I said I'm just going to keep he said I'll just keep praying about it and if it's not right it's not right and so I said well that's what I'm going to do and about I think I don't even remember the timing fully now but it may have been six weeks that went by and I finally called him up and I said I don't know what to say here because it's you know I feel kind of foolish but I do not have any peace about this from the Lord and I think I'm just going to have to pass and unless he makes it plain to me and clear that this is the right thing that he wants me to do then I'm not going to do it and he said brother that's fine and you know we just let it be and I never had peace about that it wasn't until years later that another missionary was sitting in my office you know I ended up coming on staff at the church I was at and had a full time position there doing a ton of things that a missionary sat there across my desk from me and we talked and I told him I said you know I had an opportunity one time to go to such and such a church with this guy and he wanted me to do this and do that and the man just smiled and he shook his head and he's like Toby no that would have never worked and I was like what why not what do you mean and he just smiled and he's like and he gave me three things that were just da da da da you know that and when he's talking it was such a calm guy that it was like the peace of God was finally coming in and resting on my heart and saying it's okay you made the right decision you didn't have an answer from me and I never wanted you to do that anyway you checked it out thank you but no and when he spoke to me it was probably three years later I bet till I finally got resolution in my heart that I had made the right choice and it took a wise old man to sit there and just tell me some things and from his insight that just it all was perfectly clear as soon as he started talking and explaining some things that I didn't know and it was a blessing from God but in the moment

[39 : 27] I felt like I was in a straight and I didn't know what to choose but I knew I needed the peace from God and that's the final thought I want to leave with you if you don't have peace from God don't make decisions especially when they're tough ones and you got pressure on you to do it seek peace from the Lord alright we'll be dismissed with that thank you for being here and let's have a word of prayer and then we can depart Father again thank you that we can meet on a Wednesday night for the doors being opened thank you Lord for the word of God and for the example that the Apostle Paul is to us and for the scripture that he left for us and Lord now help us to take it and to use it and certainly we're going to find ourselves in some tight spots in this life and each one here has different experiences and different situations so Lord help the I pray the word of God can minister to each heart and can strengthen each believer in preparing them for how to make the right choice when they need to help us to think on others help us to be examples to others especially the younger in Christ the weaker brothers and help us Lord to make those decisions that we'll never be ashamed of when we stand before you and give account but knowing that we chose to do what we believe it was right and then Lord

I finally ask that you grant peace give us peace in our hearts let us know it's of you give us answers when we need them please be ever present I know you'll never leave nor forsake but sometimes God we just need you to direct our ways and help us to then trust in you give us faith to trust you and to walk with you give us faith to continue amidst this wicked generation this perverse generation we live amongst I pray God that you'll give us wisdom give us direction and discernment and again finally we love you thank you for Jesus Christ our Savior it's in his name I pray Amen Amen Alright you're dismissed thanks to God thank you guys for watching and enjoy His bewitchens thank you for listening I pray for coming today next healing please

I pray for Him please I pray for Him I pray for Him together I pray for Him You that will be better I may hear Him You that will be for your help